

## Women leaders engage in gynae cancer dialogue



ANZGOG's inaugural *Women of the Roundtable* initiative was recently held at a breakfast hosted by Dr Alison Brand, ANZGOG Chair and Alison Evans, Executive Officer.

This was the first time women leaders have come together to talk about gynaecological cancer research. A select group of 20 outstanding Australian women attended from media, business and Government sectors.

Sponsored by Commonwealth Bank, the aim of the event was to inspire conversation about gynaecological cancer research, awareness and ideas to help ANZGOG achieve a goal of raising awareness and \$1million for new research.

The contribution by everyone was outstanding. Dr Brand noted, "We were very pleased to have had such a terrific response, both to the event and in conversation on the day. Attendees shared stories, ideas and were inspired to get involved"

A number of the guests commented that they were unaware of the serious facts surrounding gynaecological cancer and the misconception that a Pap Smear test for cervical cancer also identifies all seven types of gynaecological cancer.

Outcomes from the event include follow up meetings to organise corporate information programs and support activities. Two attendees signed up on the spot to ANZGOG's 10,000 steps a day initiative, **Go step for Gynae**.

The momentum generated from the first Sydney *Women of the Roundtable* event will continue with ANZGOG exploring new opportunities for awareness and fundraising with attendees and their businesses. ANZGOG will create an Advisory Council of passionate women leaders who will meet twice a year to discuss activities that will help ANZGOG achieve its goals of improving prevention and treatment of gynaecological cancer.

## Hello from ANZGOG

Thanks to all our supporters and the amazing fundraising efforts we have seen this year.

As a non-profit organisation, ANZGOG needs help like yours to fund our research. Clinical trials are costly and funding is the major barrier we face in opening new trials and expanding our research portfolio.

*It's important to remember that virtually every advance in survival for cancer has been made on the back of clinical trials.*

Much of the research carried out by ANZGOG compares a promising new treatment with the current best treatment in an effort to improve patient outcomes. Patients expect that these new treatments are fully evaluated for safety and efficacy prior to implementation. Understandably, women also want this accomplished as quickly as possible. Our collaborative research both nationally and internationally is a way to make this happen.

Just \$1,000 will allow us to add a woman with a gynaecological cancer to one of our research studies. Your support helps us develop more research projects and work to find new treatments for gynaecological cancers. Thank you.

**Dr Alison Brand | ANZGOG Chair**



Just launched, **GO for Gynae** is a community-focused call to action to grow awareness of gynaecological cancers and fundraise for ANZGOG's research.

Our new website shows how you can take part in our activities and fundraise and features information about gynae cancer, symptoms, treatment and research. Check it out at [www.goforgynae.com.au](http://www.goforgynae.com.au).

Or if social media is your thing, become part of our growing Facebook community at [www.facebook.com/goforgynae](http://www.facebook.com/goforgynae).

## Women politicians support 'GO for Gynae'



In July we met with the member for Marrickville, the Hon. Ms Carmel Tebbutt MP, to discuss the need for increased awareness about gynaecological cancer. The conversation triggered an invitation to ANZGOG to host an information morning and photo-shoot for women in politics at NSW parliament.

It was wonderful to meet 16 of NSW's women politicians (from all sides of politics) and talk about ANZGOG and our work. As the Hon. Ms Marie Ficarra

said, "There is nothing political about gynaecological cancer."

A number of the politicians participated in **GO Step for Gynae** and tweeted or posted about their involvement.

A motion was also passed in NSW Parliament by the Hon. Ms Ficarra - "That this House congratulates and commends ANZGOG for its outstanding work in Gynaecological Cancer Research and its Board."

# Comedy for Cancer raises \$61,000 for research

Comedy for Cancer Downunder 2014 was held on 13 September at the spectacular Fairground Follies in Sydney. Now in its 4th year, this cornerstone event has grown from strength to strength with \$61,000 raised on the night.

The venue provided a wonderful backdrop with a sense of fun and nostalgia for the evening. The comedians - Jackie Loeb, Marney McQueen, Jean Kittson and Tommy Dean - had the audience thoroughly entertained. Shelly Silberman, a long-time supporter and passionate advocate of ANZGOG was the MC and worked her magic with the crowd with her quick-witted one liners and compassion for women with gynaecological cancer.

The event would not have been such a success with our wonderful sponsors, donors, suppliers and volunteers. On behalf of ANZGOG we would like to thank Aurora Expeditions for their donation of a cruise for two to the Arctic valued at \$18,200 and Brown-Forman's GROW group for their wonderful support.

We would also like to thank everyone who donated auction items including Karaniya Experience for 10 nights accommodation in Bali; Emirates Airlines and Te Mahia Bay Resort New Zealand; Captain Cook Cruises Fiji; OPSM; Fantastic Furniture and artists Camille Hirschwitz and Gail Edmonds. A special thank you must go out to our organising committee and volunteers on the night - Shelly Silberman, Cathy McCrae, Chris Evans, Heldi Pilli, Penny Kemp, Kerry Walsh, Donna and Lindsay McRae, DJ Daniel Rowntree and all the amazing Brown-Forman staff.



Jean Kittson & Tommy Dean | Photo courtesy of Anna Kucera, Time Out

## 10% off Arctic holidays for ANZGOG supporters

One very lucky ANZGOG supporter won the ultimate prize at our Comedy for Cancer Downunder charity event – a trip for two to the European Arctic with Aurora Expeditions.

Now our friends at Aurora Expeditions are offering our loyal ANZGOG supporters a special offer to thank you all for your support and donations.

Simply book on their 2015 'Wild Scotland (SCOT11)', 'Across the Arctic Circle (SNS04)' or 'Jewels of the Arctic (GRN27)' expeditions before 31 December 2014 and you'll SAVE 10% off the retail price.



Find out more about each expedition at:

- [www.auroraexpeditions.com.au/anzgog](http://www.auroraexpeditions.com.au/anzgog)
- call Aurora Expeditions on 1800 637 688
- email [info@auroraexpeditions.com.au](mailto:info@auroraexpeditions.com.au)
- quote ANZGOG to receive your discount.

*Discount is valid on all new bookings made before 31 December 2014 and is not valid with any other offer. Other terms and conditions may apply.*

## Featured clinical study



# ECHO

## Exercise during Chemotherapy for Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer is the most common cause of gynaecological cancer death, with an overall 5 year relative survival of only 43%. Treatment for ovarian cancer typically involves extensive surgery and high-dose chemotherapy with adverse side effects impacting physical wellbeing, function and quality of life.

The ECHO trial will identify whether incorporation of an exercise program into the current standard of care for women undergoing chemotherapy for primary ovarian cancer is an effective and cost effective way to improve medium and longer term health outcomes.

The study will recruit women who are 18 years of age and over, newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and scheduled for chemotherapy. The exercise intervention, to be delivered by accredited exercise physiologists, will span the duration of chemotherapy (approximately 18 weeks) and involve the individual prescription of aerobic- and resistance-based exercise at moderate-intensity, accumulating 150+ minutes per week.

The primary outcome is to determine physical wellbeing at 6 and 12 months post-diagnosis. For further information about the study and participation, please contact A/Prof Sandi Hayes at [sc.hayes@qut.edu.au](mailto:sc.hayes@qut.edu.au).

ECHO is a collaboration between ANZGOG, Queensland University of Technology and the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, University of Sydney. It is funded by Cancer Australia.

# GO for Gynae steps out in 2014



**GO step for Gynae** raises funds for ANZGOG and gynaecological cancer research, while improving your health.

The challenge was 10,000 per day steps starting in September for 30 days for International Gynaecological Cancer Awareness month. It's a national campaign and allows people to participate anywhere and anytime.



Each participant asked their friends, family and colleagues to sponsor them through Everyday Hero.

Our amazing supporters raised more than \$12,000. Over 55 individuals and teams took up the challenge including ANZGOG members, consumers, supporters, staff and even NSW members of parliament took part. There were **GO Steppers** in Qld, Vic, SA and NSW.

You can still show your support by going to <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/go-step-2014/>

Watch this space for **Go step for Gynae** in 2015!

## ANZGOG's research selection process explained

ANZGOG is an independent not-for-profit conducting research into the best treatments for women with gynaecological cancer.

Our 600-strong membership includes surgeons, physicians, oncology nurses, radiotherapists, research managers, pure scientists and cancer survivors.

A peak group of clinicians from our membership serve on our Research Advisory Committee (RAC) which reviews new research ideas and identifies which trials ANZGOG will support.

ANZGOG Tumour Type Working Groups

work with the RAC and currently focus on the three main gynaecological cancers - ovarian, cervical and endometrial. These groups identify gaps in research, opportunities to participate in international studies and review ideas by other researchers.

Research goals for ANZGOG include:

- Large international collaborative trials to answer significant treatment questions.
- Smaller nimble trials looking at:
  - rare tumours (55% of ovarian cancers are rare)
  - quality of life treatments
  - genomic studies

Once the RAC approves a trial, and after rigorous scientific and independent ethical review and approval, a Trial Management Team administers the study. ANZGOG clinical trials may recruit patients at up to 50 hospitals nationally and in NZ. Many of ANZGOG's trials are also conducted overseas.

For more information:

- [www.anzggog.org.au](http://www.anzggog.org.au)
- ANZ Clinical Trials Register <http://www.anzctr.org.au/>
- Talk to a gynaecological oncologist – they are ANZGOG members.

## Current ANZGOG trials open to recruitment

For more information go to the 'Clinical Trials' section at [www.anzggog.org.au](http://www.anzggog.org.au)

<p><b>Ovar 2.21</b> Ovarian</p>	<p>This trial compares the benefit of two chemotherapy treatment combinations (carboplatin/gemcitabine/bevacizumab vs. carboplatin/pegylated liposomal doxorubicin/bevacizumab) in patients with platinum-sensitive recurrent ovarian cancer.</p> <p><a href="mailto:ovar2.21@ctc.usyd.edu.au">ovar2.21@ctc.usyd.edu.au</a></p>	<p><b>Paragon</b> Rare Tumours</p>	<p>To see if anastrozole (an aromatase inhibitor, also known as Arimidex®) which is a hormonal or anti-oestrogen therapy will help reduce the size of tumours and delay the time to progression, as well as improve symptom control and quality of life, in women with potentially hormone responsive recurrent gynaecological cancers.</p> <p><a href="mailto:paragon@ctc.usyd.edu.au">paragon@ctc.usyd.edu.au</a></p>
<p><b>OvQuest</b> Quality of Life</p>	<p>This online study aims to fill the gap in research to better understand the health related quality of life in ovarian cancer survivors, as well as their specific symptoms and concerns, physical activity levels and the relationship between physical activity and symptoms. Open to women diagnosed with ovarian cancer more than six months ago who have received chemotherapy.</p> <p><a href="mailto:k.webber@unsw.edu.au">k.webber@unsw.edu.au</a></p>	<p><b>feMME</b> Endometrial</p>	<p>This trial accesses a new approach to the treatment of endometrial cancer, thus sparing women major surgery. Our aim is to find out the effectiveness of Mirena® (a hormonal intrauterine device), Mirena® with Metformin (an oral antidiabetic drug), and Mirena® with weight loss at getting rid of endometrial cancer and endometrial hyperplasia with atypia.</p> <p><a href="mailto:sara.scalzo@health.qld.gov.au">sara.scalzo@health.qld.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>REZOLVE</b> Ovarian</p>	<p>REZOLVE aims to evaluate the safety and potential palliative benefit of intraperitoneal bevacizumab (chemotherapy treatment) in patients with symptomatic ascites due to advanced chemotherapy resistant ovarian cancer.</p> <p><a href="mailto:rezolve@ctc.usyd.edu.au">rezolve@ctc.usyd.edu.au</a></p>	<p><b>Outback</b> Cervical</p>	<p>The Outback trial will test the value of giving women with locally advanced cervical cancer, adjuvant chemotherapy following completion of standard chemo-radiation treatment. It aims to improve survival rates for these women, many of whom have a 40% or greater chance of their disease relapsing after treatment.</p> <p><a href="mailto:outback@ctc.usyd.edu.au">outback@ctc.usyd.edu.au</a></p>

## CLINICIAN PROFILE

# Dr Michelle Harrison Medical Oncologist, Sydney

### What are you passionate about?

Like all clinicians I am passionate about providing the best care to my patients. I have a particular interest in rare gynaecological cancers. I find them fascinating, challenging and I would like to dedicate my time to joining others in this field of research. In ANZGOG we have amazing mentors and I am particularly inspired by Prof Michael Friedlander and A/Prof Clare Scott who have contributed an enormous amount in this field.

### Why gynaecological oncology, and in particular, gynaecological oncology research?

I was exposed to gynaecological oncology very early in my training and loved the complexity of this sub-speciality. After finishing my training, I spent 6 months doing a genetics fellowship and then travelled to the UK to undertake a fellowship in gynaecological oncology, renal cancers and melanoma with Prof Martin Gore. I have had two fantastic mentors in gynaecological oncology throughout my training and fellowship years, so it was natural that my research projects had a focus in in this area.

### What trials are you currently working on?

We have a number of ANZGOG clinical trials in ovarian, endometrial and cervical cancer across both sites Chris O'Brien Lifehouse and Liverpool Hospital.

On one project I am working with ANZGOG Member Clare Scott helping to improve recruitment to CART-WHEEL. CART-WHEEL is a rare cancer registry open to all patients and encouraging our patients to enrol will facilitate research into rare gynaecological cancers.

I am also working with Dr Annabel Goodwin to streamline rapid genetic testing in ovarian cancer for patients automatically eligible for testing.

### What trials would you like to see developed in the future?

I would love to see a greater number of patients with rare gynaecological cancers in clinical trials. It would be my hope that in the next few years we have nearly all patients with a rare gynaecological cancer enrolling to CART-WHEEL. At present this fantastic resource is underutilised and



there is so much potential for research in rare cancers if we can all contribute.

### Where do you see yourself in 5 years, personally and professionally?

I will still be too busy. I have 2 very beautiful daughters and adore my time with them. Professionally, I am primarily a clinician and will continue to look after patients with gynaecological as well as breast and renal cancers. I will still be actively involved with ANZGOG. My main area of research will be dedicated to rare gynaecological cancer research.

To find out more about  
CART-WHEEL go to  
<https://www.cart-wheel.org>

## Thank you to our fundraising heros

We are grateful for the generosity of those people who have made ANZGOG the charity of choice for their fundraising efforts. For more information about raising funds for ANZGOG's research, contact Sarah on 02 8071 4885 or [development@anzgog.org.au](mailto:development@anzgog.org.au).



Ben Dooley and the team from Carey Baptist School, Kew raised \$1,300 in Run Melbourne



Brown-Forman's GROWing GOFERS ran in the Colour Run in Sydney, raising over \$2,000.

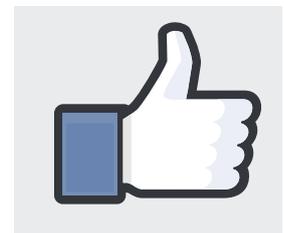


The Mighty Maui Divas swam the 16km open ocean Maui Channel Swim in August and raised over \$25,000.



Pennie Stoyles competed in Run Melbourne and raised over \$1,600.

And of course, a HUGE thanks to everyone who took up the **GO step for Gynae** challenge to raise funds for ANZGOG's research!



### LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Join our ever-growing Facebook community. Learn about gynaecological cancers, take part in conversations, fundraise for research into new treatments and share your story.

[www.facebook.com/goforgynae](http://www.facebook.com/goforgynae)



## Make a donation to ANZGOG's research

Click here or go to [www.goforgynae.org.au](http://www.goforgynae.org.au) to access our secure online donation form.



*Raising funds to improve life for women through research*

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